

Oh Little Town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)

Proposition: There are three essential truths that can be drawn out of this prophetic passage concerning this little town that have an enormous eternal importance to our lives.

I. **The Definition of Bethlehem** (Vs. 2a-b)

- A. Bethlehem points us to the Fullness of God. (Vs. 2a)
- B. Ephratah points us to the Fruitfulness of God. (Vs. 2a)
- C. Judah points us to the Faithfulness of God. (Vs. 2b)

II. **The Description of Bethlehem** (Vs. 2b)

- A. Bethlehem is Stated as a Little City (Vs. 2b)
- B. Bethlehem is Situated in a Little Country (Vs. 2b)
- C. Bethlehem is Celebrated for a Little Cradle (Vs. 2b)

III. **The Declaration of Bethlehem** (Vs. 2c-d)

- A. The Existence of the Christ of Bethlehem is Declared (Vs. 2c)
- B. The Exaltation of the Christ of Bethlehem is Declared (Vs. 2c)
- C. The Eternality of the Christ of Bethlehem is Declared (Vs. 2d)

O Little Town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)

O Little Town of Bethlehem is one of the most familiar of the Christmas hymns we sing. It was written by an Episcopalian pastor named Phillips Brooks in

1867. He wanted to compose an original Christmas hymn for the children's Christmas program. 3 years earlier, Brook had taken a trip to the Holy Land and actually attended a Christmas eve service at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Being deeply moved he, wrote, "I remember standing in the old church in Bethlehem close to the spot where Jesus was born

— when the whole church was ringing hour after hour with splended hymns of praise to God, how again and again it seemed as if I could hear voices I knew well telling each other of the wonderful light of the Saviour's birth." From that experience was born the familiar words, "O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie, Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by." The deep impact and eternal significans that

pastor Brooks expressed in his lyrics has

I The Definition of Bethlehem (Vs 2a)

The book of Micah preaches similar sermons to the Northern + Southern Kingdom of the Jews, Israel + Judah. In these messages,

yields us three names concerning the birthplace of
A. Bethlehem points us to the Fullness of God.

The Prefix Beth in Hebrew language indicate "house." Abraham stayed at Beth-El = House of God. Bethlehem means House of bread. Bethlehem was looked upon as the bread basket or the harvest capital of Israel. How fitting that God would choose such a city to be birthplace of the Bread of Life - The Lord Jesus. ⁽³⁾ John 6:35 Jesus said

B. Ephrath points us to the fruitfulness of God. Now I am from a small town called Trenton Ga. There is another well known Trenton in N.J. Needless to say when you put Trenton with Ga or N.J. it makes a world of difference. Likewise there is more than one Bethlehem. To distinguish Bethlen from the other one in tribe of Zebulun is given name Ephrath = fruitfulness. ⁽⁴⁾ Luke 2:8 shepherds

C. Judah points us to the faithfulness of God. The tribe of Judah are the descendants of the son of Jacob named Judah. Upon the death bed of Jacob a prophecy was given concerning Judah. ⁽⁵⁾ Gen 49:10 Jacob prophesies New thousands of years later that babe who would die to open the gates of salvation was born from the very tribe that God had promised. We

II. The Description of Bethlehem (Vs 2a)

The hymn of our focus and the scripture before us give us somewhat of a description of the birthplace of the Messiah.

1) ...lyrics, has it's rood in this ancient passage of Micah chapter 5.

There are three essential truths that can be drawn out of this prophetic passage concerning this little town that have an enormous eternal importance to our lives. Notice first...

2) ...birthplace of the messiah that have significant meaning.

3) **John 6:35** ...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The fullness of God's salvation in Christ Jesus says that if any man hunger they can come find the life giving sustenance. There will never be a short supply!

4) ...shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks grazing on the fruitful hills of Bethlehem. Again how fitting that the Lord Jesus who produces eternal fruitfulness in the lives of His sheep be born in a place known for fruitfulness. **Romans 6:22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

5) Genesis 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

6) We ought to praise a faithful God who sent His only begotten Son into the world to provide a way to know the fullness and the fruitfulness of God!

1) ...God often does the biggest things in the smallest of places. 1

Corinthians 1:27-28 *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

2)doing and arranges things according to his Sovereign plan and purpose!

3) ...small and insignificant, yet Jesus took it, broke it and multiplied it a multitude. There in Bethlehem the bread of life was presented in a little cradle, to soon be broken on the cross of Calvary to be received by all that will come!

I want you to notice something about this
A. Bethlehem is stated as a Little City - When referring to Bethlehem hundreds of years before Christ's birth, the prophet Micah describes the village as little city. Today, Palestinian settlements in the West Bank town of Jerusalem now host a population of around 30K people. But thousands of years ago, this small town became the focus of eternity. That is the way with God, God often

B. Bethlehem is situated in a little country - When the Canaan land was divided, the tribe of Judah was given the southern part of the country. Although a small region the great city of Jerusalem was in its territory.

- This parallels the prophecy stating that a King a Messiah would be born out of the tribe of Judah. God knows what he is doing and

C. Bethlehem is celebrated for a little cradle - Bethlehem was a little city in a little country yet its purpose was not little. Yet the cradle was little, a little cradle for a little baby. But yet little Bethlehem was prophesied and privileged to present the Bread of life to the whole world. Just as the little says

lunch of 5 loaves & fishes were small & insignificant
III. The Declaration of Bethlehem (VSO)

Micah is an old testament prophet. Prophets are men chosen by God to deliver God's message to his people. Some specifics are that that they

contradict other divine revelations or prophecies

A. The existence of the Christ of Bethlehem is Declared - Although this message is themed around the little town of Bethlehem this is not an infomercial to get you to come to Bethlehem. The focus is on the Christ of Bethlehem. He is the centerpiece of Micah's revelation from God. "Out of the" Some today suggest that the historical Jesus never truly existed. That he is the invention of the Church.

B. The exaltation of the Christ of Bethlehem is Declared. - Not only a person was to come forth from Bethlehem, but He was also "to be ruler in Israel." Some try to suggest that this ruler was Hezekiah or Zerubbabel, but neither king was born in Bethlehem. This reference is to none other ruler than the Lord Jesus Christ. Matt 2:2 tells us he is to be King of Jews.

C. The Eternality of the Christ of Bethlehem is Declared. This ruler who was coming to Bethlehem would never claim Bethlehem as the place of His beginning. The verse says "going forth..." One author wrote "Bethlehem was only a comma in Christ's eternal existence. He always has been, He is and He always will be." That is why He is called "The King Eternal".

IV. Closing - The final verse of the Little town of Bethlehem says, "O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray, cast out our sin and enter in Be born in us today. Receive Christ today, Repent + Believe."

- 1) ...and they must prophesy without any possible error or inaccuracy. A study of the book of Micah reveals that indeed, he is a prophet of God. So Micah was sent by God with something to say to not only the people of his day but to you and I. What was his declaration?
- 2) ...of the church world, a figment of religious imaginations. But he was a real person. The existence of Jesus is as Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "...not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world." The reality of Jesus is seen in the fact of a real and actual birth. Jesus was born in and introduced to the world from Bethlehem.
- 3) ...King of the Jews. Even at his death, Pilate, who found no fault in Jesus, hung a sign on the cross stating, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." In 1 Timothy 6:15 Paul sums Jesus kingship up by saying *...the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*; In Revelation Ch 5 we see him worshiped by every being in the universe declaring that all *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*
- 4) ...Eternal in 1 Timothy 1:17. And this eternal King by virtue of His substitutional death on the cross and miraculous resurrection from the dead, calls you to eternal life.